

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please amend the specification by inserting, before page 1, line 1 after "SPECIFICATION" the following:

**RELATED APPLICATIONS**

"The present invention is a divisional of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/860,075, filed May 17, 2001. --

Please add the following new paragraph on page 2 after paragraph [0006]:

[0006.1] In a second, forming step, the rubber composition obtained at the end of the first step is extruded in order to obtain a cross-linkable, expandable support blank of predetermined form.

Please replace paragraph [0029] at page 7 with the following amended paragraph:

[0029] According to one embodiment of the invention, this cross-linking and expansion process may consist:

- in a first step, of subjecting said or each cross-linkable, expandable blank to said cross-linking in order to obtain a practically cross-linked, expandable blank, then

- in a second step, of subjecting said or each blank which is practically cross-linked and expandable which is obtained following said first [[stage]] step to said expansion, in order to obtain all or part of said corresponding cross-linked, expanded safety support.